

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Astrakhan Airfield

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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

Paragraph 11-12: PW No 7041, who made his observations from the summer of 1945 to the spring of 1949 from his place of work. Detained in PW Camps 7204/1 through 3.

Paragraph 13-16: PW, ex-AAA sergeant, who made his observations from various places of work during the period from 1945 to April 1949. Detained in PW Camps 7204/1 through 3.

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1. The military airfield of Astrakhan' (46°21'N/48°03'E), Astrakhan' Oblast, was about 8 km south of the town. The field was surrounded by meadows and steppes. The graveled approach road was about 4½ meters wide.
2. The field was 3x2 km and was constructed during the last war. An MVD officer said that it was to be enlarged. Truckloads of construction materials arrived continually.
3. The landing field was in poor condition. Improvements of drainage facilities and the construction of concrete runways had been started. Except for a workshop at the western edge of the field and a stationary DF station, called Adcock-short by source, no installations were observed at the field.
4. The field was occupied by about 40 aircraft of various types, including three IL-2s.
5. Soldiers were seen daily being trucked to the field from Astrakhan'. Parachuting was practiced from four J-52s stationed there. There was daily flying with biplanes from morning to night.
6. Girls from 18 to 25 years of age, who worked in the III International Plant and in the Fish Cannery, arrived at the field every evening for training as pilots and aircraft radio operators. According to these girls, this training was compulsory.
7. In the late summer of 1948 light AA guns were seen firing at air sleeves towed by IL-12s.

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8. There was an airfield about 8 km south of the town perimeter of Astrakhan', just east of a highway, on a steppe. A large brickworks with two or three smokestacks was south of the field, which extended for about 2 km along the road. There were no concrete runways or taxiways. Some temporary buildings and two small corrugated sheet metal hangars were standing along the road. A small building with a wind cone was seen between the temporary buildings and the hangars.
9. About 10 biplanes were parked in the aircraft dispersal area at the southern edge of the field.
10. Twice a day a twin-engine commercial plane with single tail assembly, called Douglas by other PW's, landed at the field. The planes approached from the west. **
11. An airfield without permanent runways or taxiways was about 3 km south of Astrakhan'. In mid-1948 the field, which extended from the northwest to the southeast, had only one brick building, which was still under construction.
12. From the flying observed only 20 to 25 biplanes seemed to be stationed at the field. Two or three twin-engine courier or commercial planes were also seen there. ***
13. There was a seaplane base about 8 to 10 km south-southwest of Astrakhan', just south of the junction of a tributary of the Volga River. One four-story brick building covered with white stucco, and a radio installation with two trellis towers about 30 meters high were seen. ***
14. The unit stationed at this base, wearing AF uniforms, consisted of about 150 men. The number 9 was seen on the gold-braided epaulets. Training with flying boats, swimming with full equipment, jumping fully clad from the seaplanes moored in the water, training with pneumatic boats, diving practice in divers' suits and the folding of parachutes were practiced. ***
15. There was daily flying with three flying boats, which were fitted with two in-line engines arranged in tandem above the fuselage, four-bladed metal propellers, two floats at the wing tips, a double rudder assembly, a tail gun position and a machine gun station at the rear of the fuselage. The craft was capable of a speed of 300 to 350 km/h. ***
16. An airfield of 2,000 x 1,500 meters was southeast of the city. A large hangar and a two-story administration building were available. The field was not occupied by a military unit. There was regular flying with twin-engine aircraft fitted with retractable landing gear and nose wheel, called Ilyushin by the Soviets, and Douglas type planes. **

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* ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. The Astrakhan' military airfield 3 km northeast of the junction of the Kizan River with the Volga appears to be still in the process of improvement. Compare ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~. It is believed that the runway showing on an aerial photograph taken during the war was being reconditioned and enlarged. From the present report it seems that the airfield was occupied by a pilot school in the summer of 1948. Premilitary pilot training was also given there.

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** ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ Comment. These data refer to the airfield about three km northeast of the military airfield, just southeast of Ozyrnoy Rugoi (46°17'30"N/48°03'30"E). According to previous information, this field was to be closed because of unfavorable weather conditions. The fuel tank installations at this field ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ dismantled in 1945 and were transferred to the new military field. See ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~. It seems that the field was in operation as a commercial installation and was used also for initial pilot training for DOSAV members.

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